

Blackledge Stories



*Memoirs, Excerpts, and Images from the Extended Family of
Lewis Blackledge of Red Cloud, Nebraska*

Volume 1

Collected and Compiled By
Michael Allan Blackledge

Blackledge Books

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*Lewis (H) Blackledge [BiA2 5:737] and Margaret Edith Lawrence [BiA2 Sp:5:737]
Photo courtesy Phyllis Turnure Pearson [BiA2 5:1722].*

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Lux et Perseverantia

Memory
All alone in the moonlight
I can smile at the old days
I was beautiful then
I remember
The time I knew what happiness was
Let the memory live again

— *Grizabella, Cats*¹

In the end, people don't view their life as merely the average of all its moments—which, after all, is mostly nothing much plus some sleep. For human beings, life is meaningful because it is a story. A story has a sense of a whole, and its arc is determined by the significant moments, the ones where something happens. Measurements of people's minute-by-minute levels of pleasure and pain miss this fundamental aspect of human existence. A seemingly happy life may be empty. A seemingly difficult life may be devoted to a great cause. We have purposes larger than ourselves.

— *Atul Gawande, Being Mortal*

Prepare a noble death song for the day when you go over the great divide.

— *Tecumseh*

“Everybody does have a book in them, but in most cases that's where it should stay.”
— *Christopher Hitchens*

“Don't let it end like this. Tell them I said something.”
— *Pancho Villa, last words*

¹ From the musical *Cats* by Andrew Lloyd Webber; inspired by T.S. Eliot's *Rhapsody on a Windy Night*

Blackledge Stories

Preface to Volume 1

This book relates to the Blackledge Family motto: *Lux et Perseverantia*. Light and Perseverance: the inner light of memory and the stories that have persevered down through the ages from those memories.

This unique family motto was introduced to us by our colleague and co-compiler David W. Blackledge of Carlisle, PA in the First Edition of *Blackledges in America*. The concept of Heraldry is prevalent in English history, and mottoes are very common in the British-style heraldry (UK, Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand), and much less common in other countries. One can find a great many motivating (and entertaining) family mottoes listed in Heraldry (Wiki). However, for our family, I'm delighted with *Lux et Perseverantia*.

The idea for this book is credited to my sister Penn – aka Penelope Sue Blackledge Woods. A freelance writer by vocation, Penn has persevered through the years. Her collection of *Family Frenzies*, essays, personal diaries, and photographic scrapbooks has shed light on numerous family stories and has been instrumental and invaluable to the compiler.

This project was envisioned as a slim companion volume to *Blackledges in America*, the 3300 page 3-volume genealogy compiled by the veteran team of Blackledge, Blackledge, and Blackledge. Not another family law firm, but specifically Mary Ann of Grants Pass, OR, Col. David W. of Carlisle Barracks, PA, and yours truly. However as touted in *Jaws: The Revenge* (1987): “This time ... it's personal.” Or perhaps my brother Pete would quote the line from *Revenge of the Nerds* (1984): “It's time for the odd to get even!” (Try translating that into a Latin family motto.)

Considering the title, I can envision that there are those who will claim that all the stories encompassed here are not strictly Blackledge stories. To those I say what Louise Farmer Smith empowered me to say: This is my book. Feel empowered to write your own. And get off the grass. (OK, I added that last one.)

Biographical references to individuals in the book are designated as BiA2 (*Blackledges in America*, Second Edition, ISBN 978-0-9722704-2-7 [hardcopy] and ISBN 978-0-9722704-1-0 [CD]); and FGM # (FindAGrave.com, Memorial #).

It is entirely possible that someday, someone will pick up this work and generate a Follow-on Edition – however it is more likely that any follow-on will appear in some digital repository or internet archive. As with the genealogical volumes, we dedicate this collection to those who are to come after us – beyond apparent direct descendants, we expect Life to provide the light, and researchers to persevere. We have recorded these stories as another link in that chain.

Michael Allan Blackledge
Albuquerque, NM, USA
30 July 2019